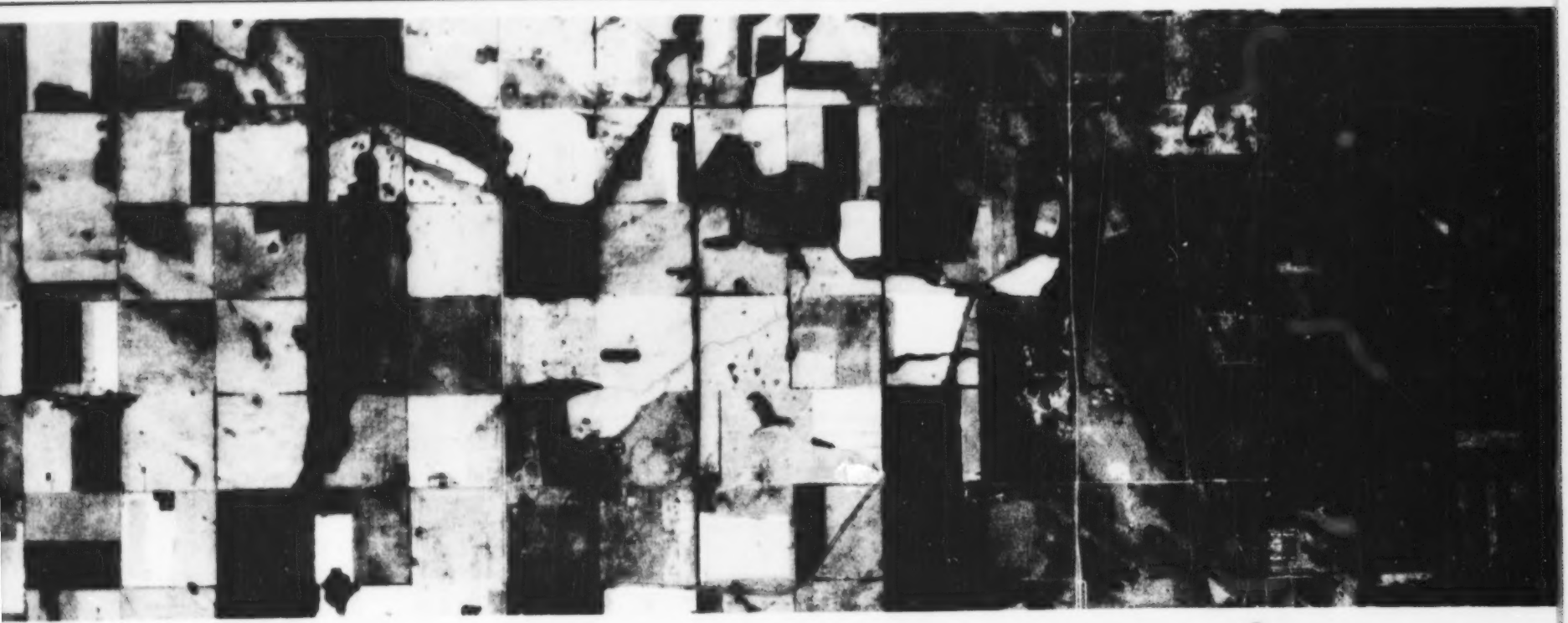
# A.L.T.A.

ALBERTA LAND TITLES AUTOMATION



Alberta

ATTORNEY GENERAL

88-05700/

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# Message from the Minister

The new Alberta Land Titles Automation system represents a bold step forward for Alberta.

Those who rely on Land Titles information will benefit from the A.L.T.A. system's increased speed, accuracy, reliability and security. For the thousands of users who live outside Edmonton and Calgary, A.L.T.A. will usher in a new era of service, with province-wide access to Land Titles information.

The Government of Alberta is committed to keeping pace with the needs of those who rely on the Land Titles Offices. The new A.L.T.A. system is an important part of that commitment, providing much-improved access for a broad spectrum of users. Municipalities, private sector companies, utilities, other provincial government departments, and individual Albertans will benefit from the new system's expanded capabilities.

**Jim Horsman**
Attorney General

# An exciting part of Alberta's history...

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*Photo left:*
*Alberta was originally surveyed into townships, consisting of 36 sections, each of approximately one square mile.*
*Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1912.*

*Photo bottom right:*
*Land has always been a highly prized commodity in Alberta. Long line-ups at the Land Titles Offices were a common occurrence in the early days.*
*Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1910.*

It started as a quiet Saturday in Edmonton, in 1892. It ended as one of the most exciting days of the decade, when the Dominion land officer tried to steal the Land Titles Office from Edmonton.

The North Saskatchewan River then divided the young settlement into two separate communities. Strathcona was located on the south side of the river; Edmonton was on the north side, and rivalry between the two communities ran high on most issues of the day.

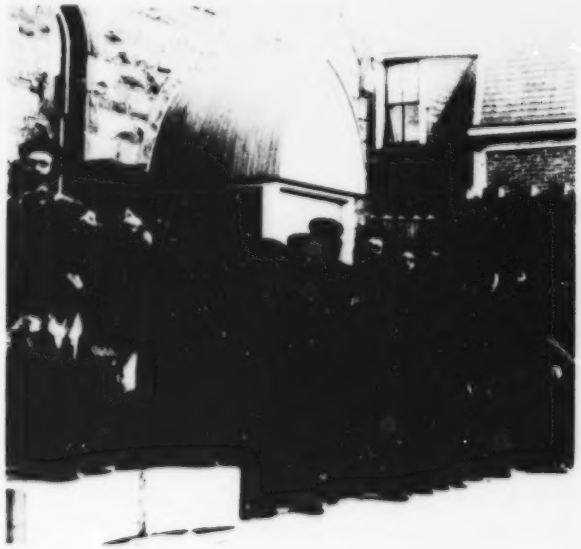
The Land Titles Office, little more than a rough shack, was located in Edmonton — a situation the land agent (a Strathcona patriot) decided to rectify. At three o'clock on Saturday afternoon, he drove his wagon up to the office, and began to load it with books and ledgers. The curiosity of bystanders turned to anger when they realized that Strathcona was trying to steal Edmonton's Land Titles Office.

Word spread, a large crowd came running, and Edmontonians took action. They unhitched the horses, then for good measure took the wheels right off the wagon. Wisely, the land agent retreated. Edmontonians formed a "Citizens' Guard" around the building that night. While calm was maintained on Sunday, rumours spread like wildfire Monday. Believing that the Mounties were coming to take the office, five hundred armed men had gathered by noon, to defend Edmonton's heritage and its Land Titles Office.

The invasion never arrived — the Land Titles Office stayed where it was — and life eventually returned to normal.

Amusing as the episode seems today, it brings to life just how strongly those first citizens felt about having ready access to Land Titles information.

Source: *The Edmonton Story*, by A.W. Cashman



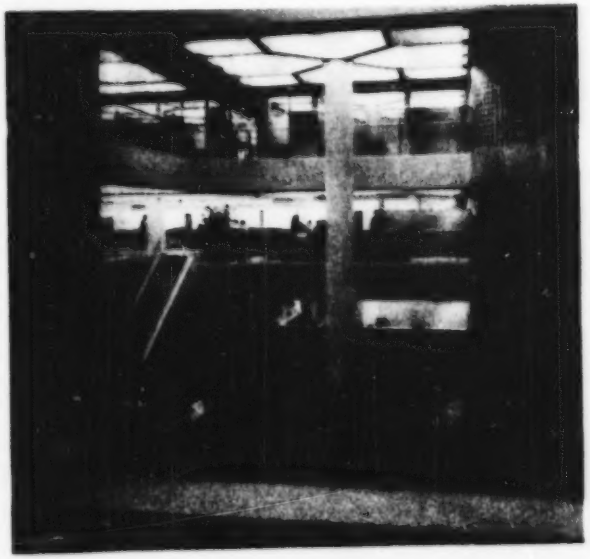
# ...An important part of Alberta's future

*Photos left and right:*
*Alberta Land Titles Offices maintain over one million active titles on over two miles of shelves.*

*Photo bottom left:*
*Land title information required by government departments, real estate firms, utilities, lawyers, and private citizens is available from modern offices in Edmonton and Calgary.*

Alberta has changed and grown, but having immediate access to Land Titles information is just as important as it was in 1892. Modern offices in Edmonton and Calgary provide essential services to business, industry, government, and individuals around the province.

Land registration in Alberta is based on the Torrens system, giving the Offices custody of all original land titles and all original documents registered against them. With this system, the Offices have legal responsibility for the validity of all land title information. The Offices also enforce laws derived from a multitude of statutes and court decisions, and provide a high level of service to the public in providing prompt registration and access to land title records.



Land Titles Offices now maintain over 1,300,000 titles, stored on about two miles (3.2 km) of shelf space. The number of transactions conducted each year dramatically illustrates the vital role played by the Offices. Between April, 1986 and March, 1987, the Offices registered 500,000 documents, provided over 6,000,000 photocopies to support title, document and plan searches, and processed more than 1,000,000 account-holder transactions. The Edmonton office handled approximately 60% of these requests from the province's Northern District, while Calgary processed the remaining 40% for the Southern District.

Land title information is required by municipal, provincial and federal government departments, by real estate companies, utilities, appraisers and assessors, lawyers, surveyors, oil and gas companies, and by individual property-owners and citizens.

Land ownership is an important facet of life, and people dealing in land expect their transactions to be processed quickly and accurately. The Alberta Land Titles Offices are dedicated to responding to these needs, and are committed to providing the best possible service to Albertans now, and in the years to come.

# Introducing A.L.T.A.- Alberta Land Titles Automation

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*Photo bottom right:*
*A modular approach is being used to implement the A.L.T.A. system. Planners meet regularly to facilitate the process of implementation.*

## Background

Over two decades ago, the Alberta Land Titles Offices first explored the possibility of automating the title system. In 1962, though, the computer age was still in its infancy. While the high costs of computer hardware posed one problem, the lack of software flexibility posed another.

Plans were not pursued until 1980, when an Information Systems Planning Study of Land Titles information needs was completed, and recommended the development of a data base system. At the same time, the Department of Energy and Natural Resources proposed a major land information system for provincial Crown lands, which is now fully operational.

By 1982, private sector consultants had completed the first phase of the project defining the A.L.T.A. data base system requirements. After a temporary delay, work progressed on the system, and by July, 1986 specifications and a conversion prototype had been completed. The next month, development and construction of the data base began in earnest.

## A Modular Approach

To speed the implementation process, the master plan for the A.L.T.A. system calls for a modular approach. This plan allows users to benefit from capabilities as they become available, while work on other modules proceeds. With the completion of the software development for Release I, two major A.L.T.A. system modules will be implemented.

Document registration and survey plan registration will be the first to be installed in the Land Titles Offices in 1988. Even as Alberta business, government, industry and individuals benefit from these registration modules, work will proceed on the conversion of existing titles and the development of other, related modules.

# A.L.T.A.-System Benefits

*Photo bottom right:*
*The most significant feature of the new A.L.T.A. system is the capability to conduct multi-parameter searches of land title information. Operators will be able to make this information available to users in a variety of formats.*

The A.L.T.A. title system was designed to meet a clearly-defined set of objectives. These included the goals of providing improved service, expanding service to remote users, standardizing procedures used by North and South registration districts, providing an integrated management information system for the Land Titles Offices, and offering a property mapping interface capability.

The major benefits of the new system will be expanded capabilities, faster response time, streamlined procedures, comprehensive security and province-wide access.

**Expanded Capabilities**

- A significant feature of the new A.L.T.A. system will be the capability to conduct multi-parameter searches of title information meeting the specific information needs of users of land-related data. It is anticipated that this information will be made available in a variety of formats, from floppy disk and magnetic tape to microfiche and paper outputs.
- Statistical trends pertaining to most facets of titled land activity available at the Land Titles Offices can be monitored to provide fast and timely trend predictions.
- A tracking module for internal office use will allow immediate access to the status of any document registration request being processed in the Land Titles Offices.
- The capability to conduct title searches by owner's name, which would enable creditors to ascertain the real property assets of debtors, would diminish the need for a separate General Register System for debt collection.

# A.L.T.A.- System Benefits cont'd...

*Photo right:*
*Title writers will enter updated title information directly into the A.L.T.A. system.*

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### Faster Response Time

With the A.L.T.A. system, the goal is to maintain terminal availability at a high 99% during business hours. Other goals include:

- Requests for searches to be completed by the system within 5 seconds.
- Copies of certificates of title to be printed within 15 seconds.

  In addition, the A.L.T.A. system will help to reduce the time involved in registering documents and survey plans.
- Searching a title will no longer require checking through rows of color-coded paper files to find the requested titles, making photocopies to give to clients, or re-filing titles. Instead, swift interaction at the terminal will see crisp, clear copies of the required titles generated within seconds at conveniently-located laser printers.
- Certificates of title will no longer need to be removed from the files to support the registration process.

*Photo right:*
*Search clerks will have on-line terminals at the public counters. The system will automatically search the title and calculate the required fees.*

### Streamlined Procedures

The availability of state-of-the-art technology, including high-speed terminals and laser printing, will streamline many Land Titles procedures:

- An automatic accounting interface will eliminate the volumes of paperwork currently involved in preparing customized statements at month-end.
- Copies of updated certificates of title will no longer need to be re-keyed by cities or by Alberta Municipal Affairs, as this information will be updated electronically.

# Operations & Security: an Overview

The A.L.T.A. system will change and streamline operating procedures, both for Land Titles Offices staff and for clients, and will see the introduction of a comprehensive security system.

*Photo bottom right:*
*Examiners will perform a number of automatic and manual legal examination checks of documents entered into the system.*

## Title Search

Each office will have several online search terminals located at the public counter in the title search area. Clients will submit their completed search requests to the Search Clerks at the terminals. A client will provide the Search Clerk with a property legal description or a simple LINC (Land Identification Numeric Code). LINC will be a unique permanent property identifier comprised of 10 characters which will appear on all titles in the new A.L.T.A. system.

The A.L.T.A. system will automatically search the title and calculate the required search fees. After paying the fee, the client will receive the requested searches. The Search Clerk will have the ability to review with the client such title information as owner name, to ensure that the correct title is being selected.

## Document Registration

All documents to be registered by the Land Titles Offices must be accompanied by a Document Registration Request (DRR) form or appropriate correspondence identifying the registration to be performed.

Once the DRR and related documents are received at the Land Titles Office, the file is forwarded to the Document Registration Teams to be examined, and if correct, to be registered.

Upon receipt of the file, the Title Writer will enter the information into the A.L.T.A. system. The system will perform online data entry validity checks. When the file is ready for examination, the Title Writer will forward it to the Land Titles Examiner.

The Examiner will recall all information entered by the Title Writer, and the system will perform a number of automatic examination steps such as Corporate Registry name checks. The Examiner will still perform a manual legal examination by checking all documents for statutory compliance and completeness (signatures, affidavits, etc.).

If the DRR and related documents are rejected, the A.L.T.A. system will produce a Rejection Notice stating the rejection reasons, which will be returned to the client along with the DRR and legal documents.

# Operations & Security: an Overview cont'd...

A.L.T.A.

*Photo bottom right:*
*Information from plan of survey documents will be processed into the A.L.T.A. system in a way similar to other land titles documents.*

If the DRR and legal documents pass the examination process, the Examiner, acting in the capacity of Assistant Deputy Registrar, will initiate the computerized registration process. The A.L.T.A. system will automatically generate and assign registration numbers to the documents; update the title (new or old) with the new information; create a history of the old information; and produce the required output, such as a Registration Information Sheet, searches of the revised titles, or any required statutory notices.

**Plan Registration**

The plan registration component of the A.L.T.A. system will process information derived from a plan of survey and related documents specific to the Surveys Section. The capture of survey document information will use procedures similar to those developed for document registration.

With the system, the Plan Examiner may search all plans in the area affected by the plan of survey to be registered, and may optionally print a "picking list" to aid in the retrieval of plans to complete the manual examination of the plan documents. The Plan Examiner may also retrieve copies of any titles affected by the plan of survey. Once the plan of survey and related document information are entered and accepted, the Examiner will indicate to the A.L.T.A. system that the registration process should be initiated. The registration process for plans and related documents will be similar to the document registration process, but will include some additional outputs.

**Accounting**

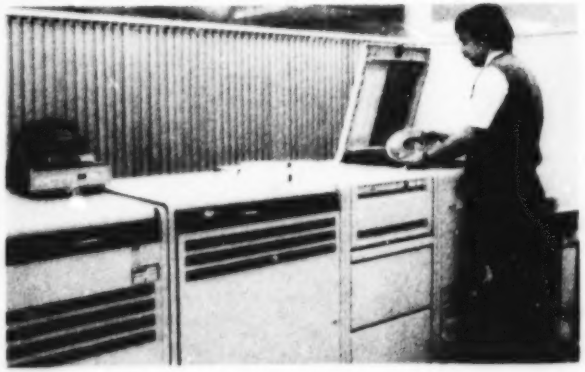
The accounting portion of the A.L.T.A. system is partially intertwined with the other areas of the system. Fees for searches and registrations will automatically be calculated and charged to the proper accounts for account customers. For cash customers, the daily cash received, broken down by search or registration category, will be captured by the system. The system will support the Land Titles Accounting Department.

*Photo bottom left:*
*Information stored in the Land Titles database files will be rigorously controlled. A complete tape back-up system will be maintained.*

*Photo below right:*
*Systems analysts continue their work on successive A.L.T.A. modules, as each module becomes operational.*

## Security

Because of the nature of Land Titles records, the integrity of the data stored in the database files will be rigorously controlled. Only authorized personnel of the Land Title Offices can, through often-altered special codes, update the contents of the database files. The system automatically retains a log of all transactions and updates, together with the identity of the authorized user. The security of the computerized record is therefore much tighter than that of a paper record. The original documents used as the basis for the information on the computerized A.L.T.A. system will continue to be microfilmed and available to clients. The existence of a complete copy of the database files and program, safeguarded separately from the computer, will be an added precautionary measure.



# The Alberta Land Titles Act

Since the A.L.T.A. system will replace the current paper certificates of title as the official record of land ownership, changes to the Land Titles Act will bring legislation in line with modern methods of record keeping. While official title information will be stored in the computer, hard-copy output will continue to be available in the form of title searches, certified copies of title and duplicate certificates of title.

# Province-Wide Access

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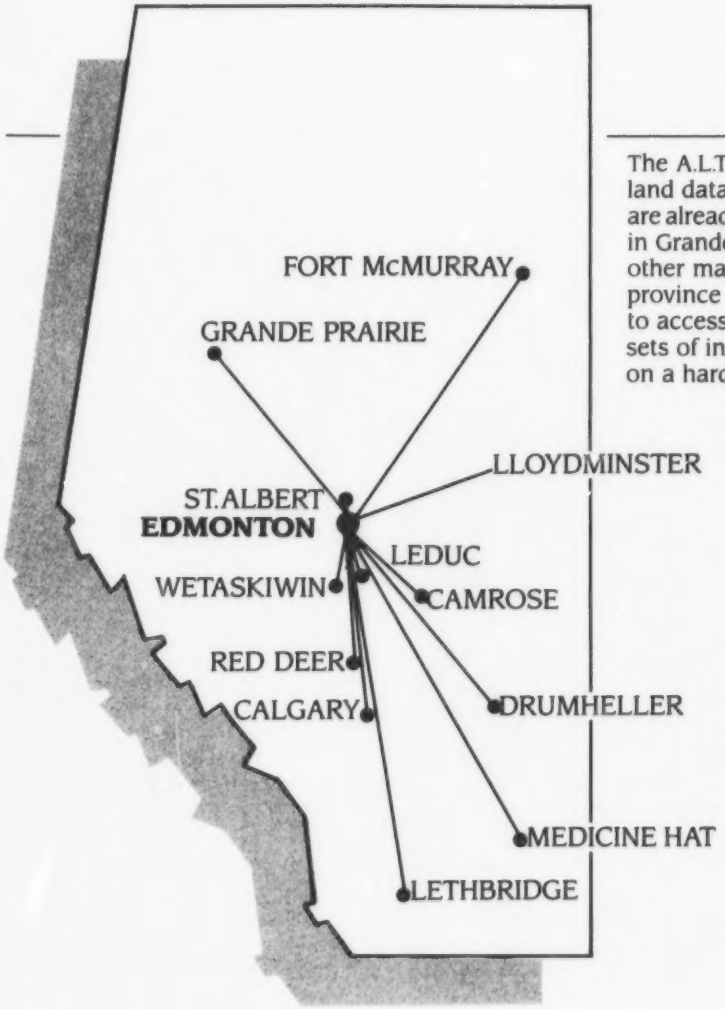


The A.L.T.A. system will allow computer access to land data for the more than 50 major clients which are already automated. Computer-supported terminals in Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat and other major centres will provide online access, province wide. The system will permit remote users to access the A.L.T.A. database to obtain pre-defined sets of information on screens or, where available, on a hard copy printer.

# A.L.T.A. - In Touch with the Future

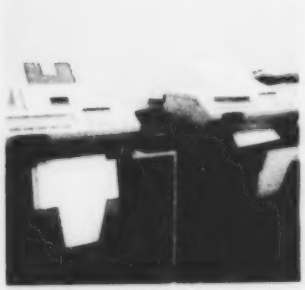

*Photo left:*
*Land Titles Offices utilize facsimile services to transmit copies of documents to customers across Alberta.*

*Photo below:*
*From bound title books to loose titles, to on-line title information, the Alberta Land Titles Offices are moving ahead -- in touch with technology, and with the needs of Albertans.*

As exciting as the A.L.T.A. system will be, greater advances lie ahead. Future integration of the A.L.T.A. system will include the ability to respond to new types of requests for information.

When A.L.T.A. is integrated within a province-wide network of land related information systems, sweep searches combining the entire A.L.T.A. system with other land-based systems will be possible. This capability will give users the ability to obtain a whole new world of information.

As one example, a municipal assessor may request and receive a listing of the value of all lands transferred during a specified time frame, with a certain soil classification, in the municipality. As another, a planning authority may investigate parcels of land of a specified size and land use within a certain geographic area.

This capability opens the door to the ability to create new public and private sector revenue in information processing services. Already playing a significant role in land-based information systems development, Alberta will have the ability to continue to evolve technologically, and develop its reputation in the sophisticated world of computer technology.

# System Configuration